BUDGET / FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

Monday, August 23, 2010

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: William O'Dell (Chair), Paul Brule and Karen Lynch School Committee, Administration and Staff: Diana Campbell (6:35), Marjorie McBride, John Saviano, Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade, Pauline Silva and George Simmons

Guests: Michael Carbone, Laurie Cadman, Veronica Turner, Paul Castigliego and Susan Rancourt

Bill O'Dell called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Paul Brule motioned to approve the minutes to the July 19 and August 16, 2010 meetings. Karen Lynch seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Public Comment

Later in meeting.

Colt Site Work

George reported the project is finished except for a few plantings and for the grass to grow; curb cuts are made and parking lines are down; approximately \$20,000 is left of the bond money. Karen was please to see families already using the playground over the weekend.

Guiteras Heating System

George said installation is complete, the gas is hooked up and a few minor finishing items will be completed by the middle of next week.

Mt. Hope High School Windows

Many more windows have been installed since the last report on August 16; they finished the caulking today. Karen said people are excited about the new windows. Paul would like to see the existing windows to the band room removed and boarded if the replacements are expected to arrive within the next few weeks; he feels it is worth dealing with boarded windows for a short time in order to complete the project before the weather turns cold or having to wait until Christmas. Melinda had no objection; there would be an issue only if the September weather is hot.

Asset Protection

Pauline reported she, Melinda and George toured the schools and are reconfiguring the plan, making a list of priorities to get a return on housing aid; they decided to let the Phase I approval expire and re-apply. Melinda said architects are being interviewed on September 1; the architect will be a very important piece.

Since we are required to fund 50% of the projects each year, we must be committed to the plan; George estimates a total of \$800,000 per year. The Mt. Hope fields project will be an addition to the plan, but not a huge one.

George reported DEM rejected our first field proposal as was expected; after the second soil sample DEM's only issue was who will provide maintenance of the area (trash, debris, poisonous vegetation); there should be no problems. Andrew Henneous is working on the MOA.

Diana asked if \$400,000 per year is reasonable and if we could ask the Town's for money should we fall short some year. Melinda and Pauline said we will do a needs assessment and will be looking at energy savings; individual projects can be moved into the next year if necessary.

All agreed that upkeep to many of our facilities had been ignored in the past, but the buildings have recently been brought to excellent condition and we must take care to maintain them.

Leaking Underground Tank

George said they found the leak; it was dug up on Wednesday.

KMS Wellness Center

Bill said he was pleased with all the documentation submitted by the group; it is time for the Committee to make a decision on their request for some financial support from the District.

PE teachers Veronica Turner, Laurie Cadman and Paul Castigliego provided further information about the project:

- Grant applications are more successful when there is buy-in from the School Committee or an administrator.
- The curriculum addresses the national and state PE and health standards.
- This will be a good place for students to become aware of obesity, physical fitness, cardio fitness and endurance and the importance of lifetime activities.
- The attempt is being made to bring the program into the 21st century and making kids accountable for themselves.
- The center will provide students who are not sports team oriented an opportunity to engage in physical activities they enjoy; it will give students a choice.
- It will be utilized the entire year and will encourage physical activity

during the after school hours.

- Staff members need this as well, hopefully to be used before and after school, but with student use always taking priority over staff use.
- It will improve the health of the entire school.
- Getting students to interact with teachers outside of the classroom can have interesting results.

Karen said the group is planning fundraising activities; she and John Bento have children at Kickemuit and have volunteered to assist; Karen feels the Committee should "put its money where its mouth is." Marj agrees, however, the Superintendent sets the curriculum and she has concerns about spending money on curriculum items; if this money is to be considered a donation, this is not allowed; as right as it sounds, it is the Superintendent's role to direct what is curriculum driven. Melinda stated she has been in support of the project since the beginning; the high school uses their center for the delivery of their curriculum as well and they are fully self-funded; this expense was not planned for in the current budget. It is good for kids to be responsible for their health and wellness but there are other ways. The Middle School has an equipment line of \$4,400 and there is another grant source with an additional \$1,000. Karen feels this Committee has a right to make a decision on this request.

Bill believes this is a worthy project and since buy-in from the District will help in getting grants, he felt \$2,500 from capital projects is

doable and appropriate and he challenged Mike Carbone to match this amount. Mike is willing to use some of his equipment funds and he believes fundraising could easily net \$10,000. Marj reminded him that PTO funds cannot be used for curriculum but can be used to enhance it.

John Saviano respectfully disagreed with Bill's suggestion; since the District provided \$15,000 to Colt Andrews, Rockwell and Guiteras for recreation purposes, he feels this project is recreation-based and the District should match that amount but with \$2,500 up front with the balance of the \$15,000 to be matching funds as an incentive for fund raising and grant writing. Paul Brule supports providing \$2,500 at this time and more at a later date if possible, but he feels the \$15,000 John mentioned does not play into this as this center will not be open during weekends or open to the public. George said the Huskies Wellness Center is open to the public from 3:00 – 5:00 PM during the school year, and on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays during the summer.

MOTION: Paul Brule motioned to provide \$2,500 from the capital projects fund to the development of the Kickemuit Wellness Center. Bill O'Dell seconded. Karen Lynch will not support the motion because she would like the amount to be \$5,000. The motion passed by a vote of 2 to 1 with Karen Lynch voting no.

Diana Campbell, Chair of the Wellness Committee, said her

Committee would be interested in supporting any fundraising activities and she invited the group to the Wellness Committee meetings. Mike Carbone added the Warren Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force has money to contribute as well.

George, Mike, Veronica, Laurie, Paul and Susan left the meeting at 7:17 PM.

Jobs Bill Update

Pauline explained the Jobs Bill is replacing ARRA funding to go toward staff members; the State anticipated \$100M in Medicaid Revenues but will receive only \$70M. All Districts should anticipate a reduction in state aid in the amount of \$30M, equal to the amount to be allocated by the Jobs Bill. ARRA funds run out in FY 12; these infusions of cash diffuse the leaner meaner trend. Melinda added the public gets misinformation in regards to these allocations; for most new fund allocations, larger amounts have previously been retracted. Bill is suspicious of the strings that will be attached; we will not actually realize any extra funding.

Marj suggested planning another meeting with our local legislators and Town Councils; Diana agreed saying they understand our budget situation better when they are brought into the process as it is developed. Melinda believes as this unfolds, is the perfect opportunity to invite them into it; we are waiting for a little more

federal and state information. Melinda is planning to post bi-monthly updates in the local papers.

Pension Reform

Pauline reported we will get a rebate of \$140,000; however, it is dated August 13 and supposed to be for FY 10, but is it actually income for FY 11.

FY 2010 Budget and Audit

There is a \$160,000 budget balance for FY 10; audit adjustments could affect this amount; the balance can be rolled into capital funds.

Diana asked about savings realized from the medical benefits changes. Pauline stated there was a \$142,000 over all savings with the plan redesign and increased co-share. The total savings amounted to \$205,000 but was offset by the HSA loss of \$63,000.

Diana asked about the policy of paper allocations to teachers; Melinda said the practice continues; teachers seem to have adjusted to the limits.

Out of District Tuition Costs

Pauline provided a comparison of out of district tuition costs for

07/08, 08/09, 09/10 and projected 10/11. She and Melinda explained:

- We are reimbursed by the State for one high end student.
- These students will factor in at a greater weight with the new funding formula.
- We received extra bonus money for extra costs for being a regional district; Karen was told by someone there is not a line item in the budget that stated this.
- The tuition costs reported do not include transportation costs; we are part of phase 3 of the state-wide take over of transportation for private schools; we will reimburse the state for each pupil they transport; before the take over, we had implemented many efficiencies with neighboring communities.
- The drop in the number of out-placed students is due to students aging out of the system and to students being kept in-district.
- Students with special needs are coming in younger and with greater need.

The District is in the process of implementing a model program to bring some out-placed autistic students back into the District; the Director of Pupil Personnel Services is committed to this initiative. Karen believes it is easier to retain a special needs child who started school in-district than to recapture a child who was first placed outside the district. Marj suggested an analysis be performed to assess the cost effectiveness of the program because these students' needs are so individual. Mario said that in some cases, we will never be able to duplicate the services received at the outside placement.

Melinda feels we must look at what is in the best interest of the child as well as the District. Diana said that as the child gets older, he/she may want to be with his peers in the town.

Adjournment

MOTION: At 7:50 PM Paul Brule motioned to adjourn. Karen Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

/ca